NO.1 BOY DETECTIVE

The Disappearing Daughter



Barbara Mitchelhill
Illustrated by
Tony Ross

ANDERSEN PRESS

For Emily, her librarian mum, Katy,
and her dad, Paul, who fixes my computer

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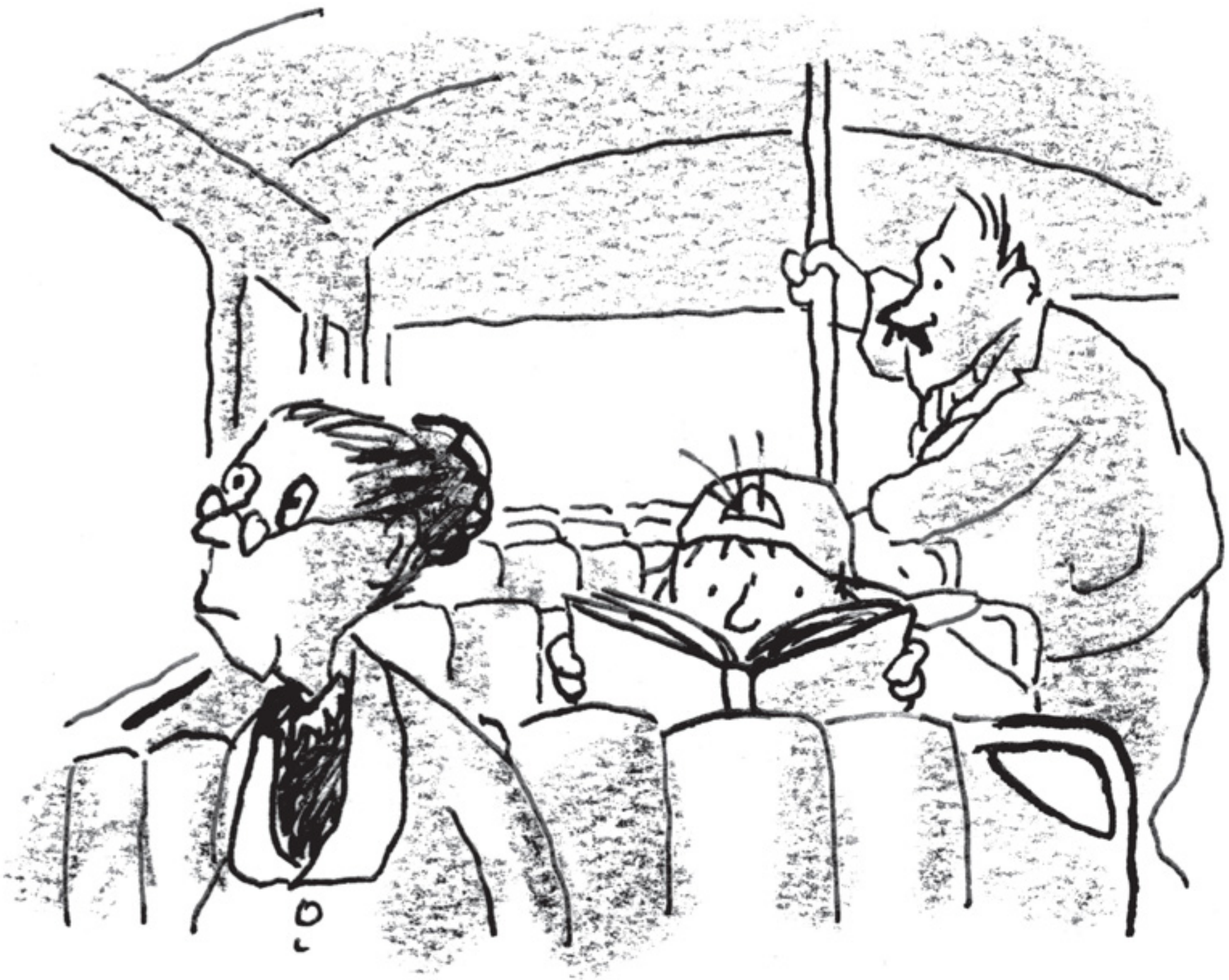
Chapter 1

My name is Drooth. Damian Drooth. I track down criminals and solve crimes. A kind of one-kid, clean-up-the-world service.

How did I start? Let me tell you . . .

It was last year. The summer holidays had started and I was BORED! You know how it is when all your friends are away at the seaside or – worse still – at Disneyland.





I was riding on a 39 bus at the time. I was feeling dead miserable, when I noticed a book on the seat next to me. *A Hundred Ways to Catch a Criminal.* I had nothing better to do – so I read it.

After that I was hooked! My life changed overnight. I was no longer a bored brat. A droopy drop-out. I was a supersleuth and my mission was to rid the world of crime.

As it turned out, I didn't have long to wait. I was in the supermarket that afternoon. I was heading for the Assorted Crisps Section, when I saw a man lurking behind the freezers. Suspicious! I thought. A villain if ever I saw one! If I was going to prevent a crime, I had to act fast. So I jumped on the vegetable counter and shouted, 'THIEF! OVER THERE! GET HIM!'



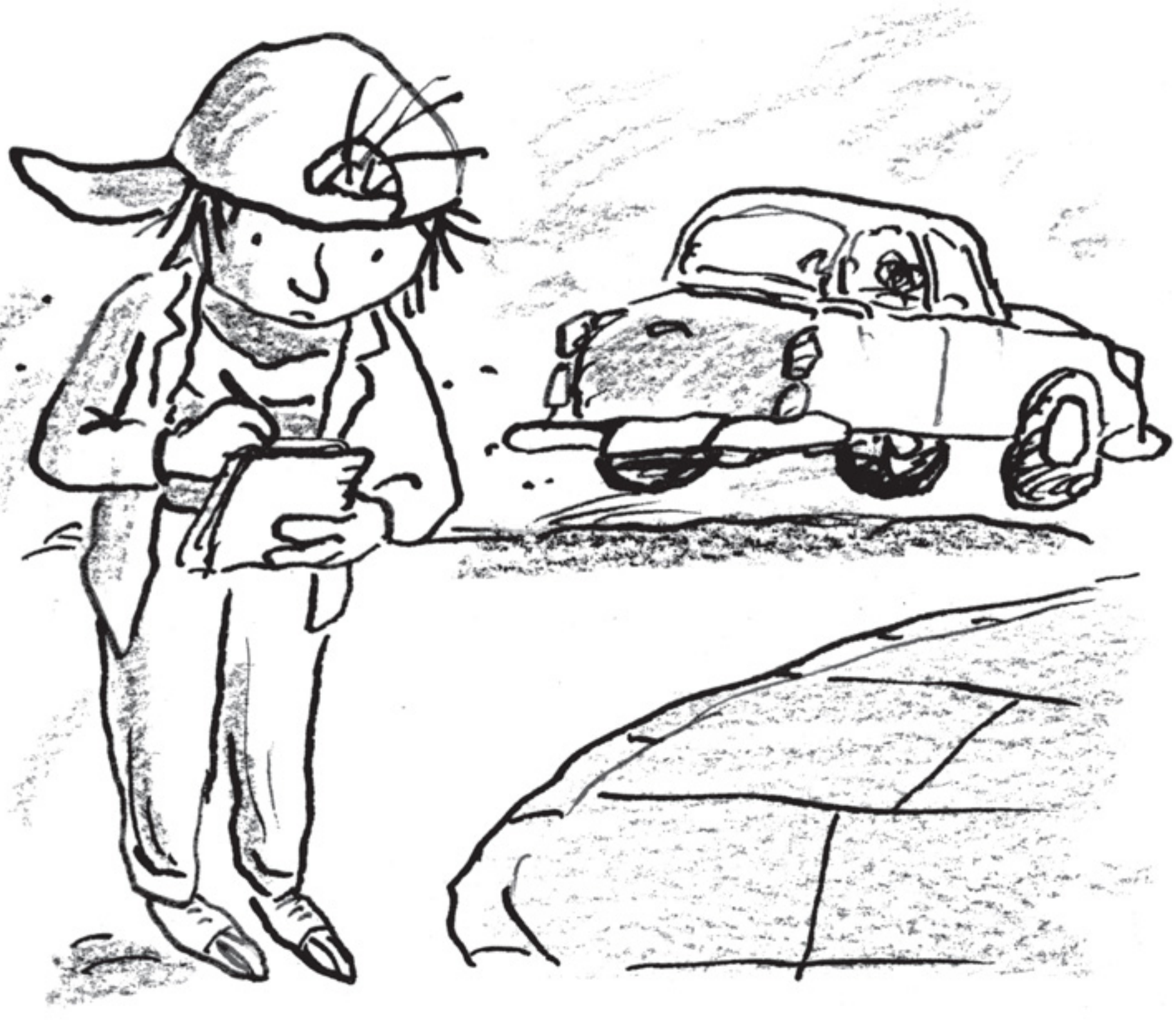
For a second, everybody in the supermarket stood still and stared at me. Then they rushed over to the Freezer Section. (The crook was shaking with fear by this time.) They surrounded him. Some bashed him



with their shopping baskets. Others grabbed him. He was finished, I could tell.

Me? I stayed cool and walked through the checkout. I didn't want publicity.





But that day, there was more . . .

On the way home, I saw a man snatch a bag outside a shop. He slung it into a big black Rover and drove off. A getaway car! I knew about them. I pulled out my supersleuth notebook and scribbled down the registration number. Then I dashed down the street to find a telephone.